

(hereinafter "*JP '705*"), and claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *JP '705* in view of *Asano et al.*

Claims 1, 3, and 10-12 have been amended for clarity only. More particularly, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite a stencil printer comprising: a printing unit for printing an image on a sheet of paper; a guide path disposed adjacent to the printing unit and along which the sheet of paper is guided to the printing unit; at least one rotating roller disposed adjacent to the guide path, wherein the at least one rotating roller helps guide the sheet of paper along the guide path to the printing unit; and at least one removing roller in contact with an outer periphery of the at least one rotating roller, the at least one removing roller rotating so as to both spread and reduce ink transferred to the at least one rotating roller so that the ink on the outer periphery of the at least one rotating roller can be dried quickly.

As a quick synopsis of the applied prior art references, Applicants hereby repeat the abstracts of *JP '705* and *Asano et al.*, as follows:

*JP '705* discloses that the problem to be solved is to prevent bleeding and setoff by forming at least the surface of an intermediate transfer body of a material having a solvent permeating property, and providing a cleaning means to clean the surface of the intermediate transfer body after transfer without using a cleaning liquid. As a solution to the problem, a stencil printer is provided with a cylinder (2), an intermediate transfer body (4) pressed against the cylinder (2), a transfer-compression roller (8) as a pressing means that presses paper (6) against the transfer body (4), and a cleaning device (10) that cleans the surface of the transfer body (4) after transfer. The intermediate transfer body (4) is formed of a silicone rubber layer as a material having a solvent permeating property in the surface and makes possible to transfer an ink image to the paper (6) in a state of having less oily components. The cleaning device (10) is composed of a cleaning roller (32), a squeezing roller (34) that

contacts the roller, and a casing (36) that stores removed ink, and ink is removed with a brush roller as the cleaning roller (32).

*Asano et al.* discloses a recording system including a recording head for performing recording on a sheet, a first rotary member disposed at a downstream side of the recording head and contacting an unrecorded surface of the sheet on which the recording is performed by the recording head and adapted to apply a feeding force to the sheet, and a second rotary member being provided at its peripheral surface with a plurality of teeth and contacting a recorded surface of the sheet with the tips of the teeth thereof, and cooperating with the first rotary member to feed the sheet. The plural teeth of the second rotary member are staggered with other teeth in a direction transverse to a sheet feeding direction. A member is provided to clean the first and second rotary members.

*JP '705* fails to teach or suggest that the stencil printer includes a rotating roller and a removing roller in contact with an outer periphery of the rotating roller, wherein the removing roller rotates so as to **both spread and reduce ink transferred to the rotating roller so that the ink on the outer periphery of the rotating roller can be dried quickly.**

More particularly, Applicants respectfully submit that the removing roller (12) of the present invention functions to spread and reduce ink transferred to the rotating roller so that the ink on the outer periphery of the rotating roller can be dried quickly.

In contrast, the cleaning roller (32) of *JP '705* is implemented as a brush roller. The brush roller of *JP '705* functions to scrape ink off of the outer periphery of the intermediate transfer body (4) so as to clean the intermediate transfer body (4). Since the brush roller of *JP '705* acts to scrape off ink on the outer periphery of the intermediate transfer body (4), the brush roller of *JP '705* cannot function to spread and reduce ink transferred to the rotating roller so that the ink on the outer periphery of the rotating roller can be dried quickly, as is

recited in independent claim 1. Therefore, the removing roller (12) of the present invention differs from the cleaning or brush roller (32) of *JP '705* in both structure and function and Applicants respectfully submit that the stencil printer of the present invention is not anticipated by *JP '705*.

With respect to claim 3, the Office Action points out that one of ordinary skill in the art would understand that the cleaning or brush roller (32) of *JP '705* rotates in accordance with the rotation of the intermediate transfer body (4). Applicants respectfully submit that *JP '705* does not show that its cleaning or brush roller (32) rotates in accordance with the rotation of the intermediate transfer body (4). The cleaning or brush roller (32) of *JP '705* cannot scrape ink off of the outer periphery of the intermediate transfer body (4) if the cleaning or brush roller (4) rotates in accordance with the rotation of the intermediate transfer body (4) because the cleaning or brush roller (32) needs to rotate in the opposite direction of the rotation of the intermediate transfer body (4) in order to effect the scraping off of the ink from the outer periphery. Therefore, the cleaning or brush roller (32) of *JP '705* does not rotate in accordance with the rotation of the intermediate transfer roller (4), but rather the cleaning or brush roller (32) of *JP '705* rotates in a direction opposite to the direction of rotation of the intermediate transfer body (4) and rotates at a rotative velocity different from the rotative velocity of the intermediate transfer body (4) since the two are of different diameters. Claim 3 has been amended to clarify that the fact that the removing roller rotates in accordance with the rotation of the rotating roller means that the removing roller and rotating roller both rotate in the same rotative direction and at the same rotative speed.

With respect to claim 10, the present invention has a pair of resist rollers which feed the sheet conveyed thereto to the printing unit at a proper timing. *JP '705* does not teach or suggest a pair of resist rollers.

With respect to claim 12, *JP '705* does not teach or suggest that the pair of resist rollers are rotated at a time of making a master by a master making mechanism contrary to the Office Action's allegation that it does.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *JP '705* in view of *Asano et al.* More particularly, Applicants respectfully submit that *JP '705* cannot be modified by *Asano et al.* in the manner set forth in the Office Action for the reason as follows.

*JP '705* discloses a cleaning roller (32) implemented as a brush roller. The Office Action alleges that the cleaning or brush roller (32) of *JP '705* is the equivalent of the removing roller (12) of the present invention. However, even assuming *arguendo* that the device of *JP '705* could be modified to replace the intermediate transfer body (4) as the rotating roller with the resist rollers (104, 105) that are rotated not only at the time of conveying a printed sheet of *Asano et al.* as suggested by the Office Action (which Applicants are not arguing that such a modification would be possible), the modified device would still include the cleaning or brush roller (32) of *JP '705* which is not capable of spreading and drying the ink on the outer periphery of the intermediate transfer body (4) as is recited by the present invention. In other words, neither *JP '705* nor *Asano et al.* ever contemplated providing a stencil printer with a removing member which functions to spread and reduce ink transferred to the rotating roller so that the ink on the outer periphery of the rotating roller can be dried quickly. Additionally, *JP '705* is not capable of being modified by the *Asano et al.* reference in the manner suggested by the Office Action because the intermediate transfer body (4) of *JP '705* could not be replaced by the resist rollers (104, 105) of *Asano et al.* without the modified device being unable to function for its intended purpose.

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments to claims 1, 3, and 10-12 do not add new matter. Applicants also respectfully submit that claims 3 and 10-12 are either directly or indirectly dependent upon independent claim 1 so that arguments serving to patentably distinguish independent claim 1 from the prior art of record are available, among others, to patentably distinguish claims 3 and 10-12. Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), and 35 U.S.C. §103(a), and allowance of claims 1, 3, and 10-12.

In view of the present amendment, claims 1, 3, and 10-12 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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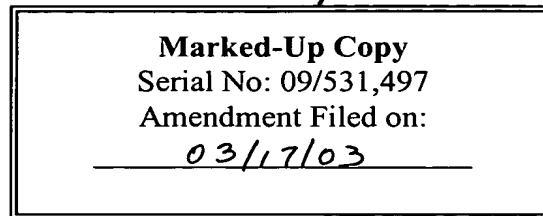
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**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend claims 1, 3, and 10-12 , as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A stencil printer comprising:

a printing unit for printing an image on a sheet of paper;

a guide path [for guiding] disposed adjacent to the printing unit and along which the sheet of paper [along a] is guided [path of which] to the printing unit[ is disposed];

[a] at least one rotating roller disposed [in] adjacent to the guide path[ and], wherein the at least one rotating roller helps guide [contributes to carry] the sheet of paper along the guide path to the printing unit; and

[a] at least one removing roller [which is] in contact with [the] an outer periphery of the at least one rotating roller[ and which rotates], the at least one removing roller rotating so as to both spread and reduce ink transferred to the at least one rotating roller so that the ink on the outer periphery of the at least one rotating roller can be dried quickly.

3. (Twice Amended) The stencil printer according to claim 1, wherein the at least one removing roller rotates in accordance with the rotation of the at least one rotating roller in that the at least one removing roller rotates in a same rotative direction and at a same rotative velocity as the at least one rotating roller.

10. (Twice Amended) The stencil printer according to claim 1, wherein the at least one rotating roller is a pair of resist rollers.

11. (Twice Amended) The stencil printer according to claim 10, wherein the pair of resist rollers are rotated not only at [the] a time of conveying a printed sheet.

12. (Twice Amended) The stencil printer according to claim 10, wherein the pair of resist rollers [is] are rotated at [the] a time of making a master by a master making mechanism.